



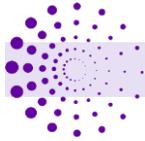
Recognizing and Retaining Volunteers

Handouts

Volunteer Impact Leadership Training Series

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Recognizing and Retaining Volunteers

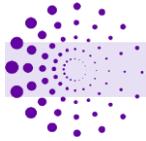
Guide to Handouts



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- H-2: Trends in Volunteer Recognition
- H-3: Asking About Recognition
- H-4: Key Concepts #2 and #3
- H-5: Types of Volunteer Recognition
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All the information from the PowerPoint presentation is included in the handouts.
To follow the handouts along with the PowerPoint slides,
note the handout number on the lower right corner of the PowerPoint (“Handout 1” etc.).





Handout 1

Learning Objectives and Key Concepts

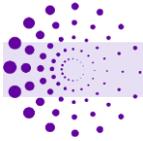
Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Identify personal and organizational barriers to giving volunteer recognition and problem solve solutions to address them.
2. Explore ways of giving formal and informal recognition within organizations.
3. Brainstorm creative recognition items and acknowledgments that are culturally appropriate for your organization to use when saying, "I noticed you!"
4. Review essential guidelines of effective recognition.
5. Understand that volunteer retention develops from doing a good job with the volunteer management best practices.

Key Concepts

1. Recognition should be meaningful to the recipient and be updated to reflect changes in how volunteers like to be recognized.
2. Recognition is an ongoing, integral part of the volunteer management process.
3. Recognition can take a wide range of forms including formal and informal recognition.
4. Recognition can be creative and fun to give and receive.
5. To increase volunteer retention, invest in practices that enrich the volunteers' experience and create an organizational culture that values volunteers.



Handout 2 Trends in Volunteer Recognition

Key Concept #1

Recognition must be meaningful to the recipient and be updated to reflect changes in how volunteers like to be recognized.

Trends in Volunteer Recognition

Increasingly some volunteers appreciate:

- Hearing the impact of their volunteer work
- Education sessions about the cause the organization addresses
- Training to build new skills
- Promote and move to a higher level of responsibility

A personal “thank you” continues to be popular.

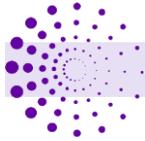
Canadian Study

Top two ways volunteers want to be recognized:

- 80% stated that they would like to be thanked by hearing about how their work has made a difference.
- Close to 70% stated they would like to be recognized by being thanked in person on an ongoing, informal basis.

There are gaps between how organizations are recognizing volunteers and how volunteers want to be recognized.

- “The most common way organizations are recognizing volunteers is by thanking them in person on an ongoing, informal basis. Great news! This is also the most popular way volunteers would like to be recognized.”
- “80% of volunteers would like to be recognized by hearing the impact of their contributions, and less than 60% of organizations are currently doing this. This highlights an opportunity for organizations to focus heavily on communicating impact to volunteers.”
- “Close to 50% of organizations are recognizing volunteers using public methods – placing thank you ads, speaking or writing about their volunteers in the media, nominating volunteers for awards- but less than 20% of volunteers want to be recognized in this manner.”



Handout 3 Asking About Recognition

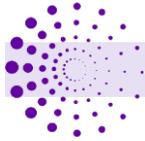
Key Strategy – Ask!

Ask volunteers how they want to be recognized

- Volunteers of different ages, cultural backgrounds, socio-economic backgrounds, geographic areas, etc., may desire different types of recognition
- Offer multiple recognition opportunities to meet the needs of more volunteers
 - Consider in addition to a larger appreciation event, could you also host multiple “lunch brunch” recognition events that are smaller and more informal?

Key Strategy – Choices!

- For in-person events, take into account dietary preferences and potential conflicts like religious holidays for various faiths.
- When offering giveaways, consider what is meaningful to different volunteers. Some may appreciate a t-shirt or notebook, while others might be much more appreciative of a small gift card. Can you offer choices?



Handout 4
Key Concepts #2 and #3

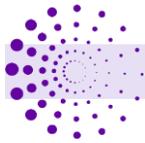
Key Concept #2

Recognition is an ongoing, integral part of the management process.

Recognition is a philosophy and an attitude that needs to permeate an entire organization (department, etc.). If it isn't a part of our organization's culture, volunteer recognition on an ongoing basis will be hampered.

Identify and address any barriers in your organization to recognizing volunteers. For example:

Possible Barriers	Overcoming Barriers
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use forms of recognition that require little time
Paid staff not feeling recognized	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give joint recognition for paid staff and volunteers• Give recognition to staff for their work with volunteers
Volunteers short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give immediate recognition



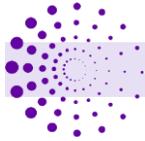
**Handout 5
Types of Volunteer Recognition**

Key Concept #3

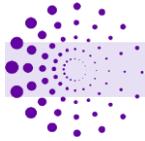
Recognition can take a wide range of forms including formal and informal recognition.

Type of Recognition	Currently Doing (Yes/No)	Priority to Increase (Check)	Ideas to Try
<p>Learning/Personal Growth. This provides an opportunity for personal growth for the volunteer. Those who wish to broaden their skills and possibly expand volunteer activities into salaried or more responsible positions can be recognized by giving them opportunities for personal and professional growth. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training seminars or workshops on skill building • Education program on the need the organization addresses • Encouraging them to take on responsibilities in a related, or even an entirely new field with appropriate support from other staff • Assigning duties which will allow growth in a skill they already have -- writing a speech for a person who "seems good with words." 			
<p>Sharing Impact. This gives the volunteer the opportunity to learn the difference their volunteer work made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending volunteer annual report • Providing volunteers with data on the impact of the volunteers' work • Stories from people served on the difference volunteers made 			
<p>Social/Network Building. This is getting together in groups to have fun, accomplish tasks, or build personal network. Persons who are motivated by a need to make friends and be with others will enjoy many kinds of group activities, whether they be strictly "business," just for fun, or a combination of both. Keep in mind that for such individuals, getting to know one another is one of their primary motivations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An elegant formal banquet • An informal potluck • A brunch, lunch, dinner, supper, snack, coffee, tea, smorgasbord, buffet • A group activity such as an outdoor activity, going to a movie, going to a museum, etc. 			
<p>Personal Acknowledgment/Gift. This includes tangible gifts or symbols, but the real significance is that these are SYMBOLIC of hard work, long hours, creativity and accomplishment. Persons who are rewarded by such means may also like to have them awarded in public ceremonies. Here's a list of starters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pins, charms, tie tacks, medals (Can you have a special design made for your organization or project?) 			





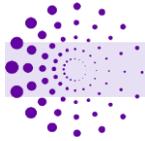
Type of Recognition	Currently Doing (Yes/No)	Priority to Increase (Check)	Ideas to Try
<p>Can you get a local artist to donate his or her talent?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate • T Shirt • Flowers • Personal gifts chosen just for volunteers by someone who knows them well 			
<p>Formal Recognition. This is the special, once or twice a year, event that would include a special presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A banquet, luncheon, brunch to present awards • A day of various entertaining and growing activities, including recognition ceremony 			
<p>Continuous Recognition. This form of recognition generates a feeling of general good fellowship in the work group atmosphere. It provides daily acknowledgments that demonstrates that the volunteer is important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell people how they are making a difference in a meaningful way • Notice when a volunteer is improving in performance/developing new skills • Move a volunteer to a position of higher responsibility • Incorporate suggestions of volunteers into future plans • Greet volunteers and know their names • Have on-going communication and evaluation systems • Invite to go for coffee 			
<p>Community Awareness. Draws public attention to a volunteer's work or organization. National Volunteer Week is a super time for this to happen, but it can also go on all year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Neighbor (or Volunteer) of the Week" feature in newspaper column, radio station • Billboards, community bulletin boards, church or school "information centers" • Mention events in school announcements, church bulletins, company newsletters 			
<p>Media Recognition. This can provide community wide recognition to both the volunteer and the organization. It can help build a favorable organization image and ease volunteer recruitment efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook post thanking volunteer • Feature stories on specific volunteers • Editorials by staff/administrators who supervise volunteers • Advertisements thanking volunteers which list the names of volunteers and services they provide • Volunteer-of-the-Month awards, promoted through the media (i.e., Good Neighbor) 			



Type of Recognition	Currently Doing (Yes/No)	Priority to Increase (Check)	Ideas to Try
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public thank you letters for specific services or donations 			
<p>Philanthropic. This is a form of publicly honoring a person. It can take the form of a donation given in the person’s name for their humanitarian, volunteer, or other charitable contributions. This is appreciated by those who feel a concern for others or have a particular “cause.” It could include donations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarships Library books Trees, bushes, shrubs, garden, bulbs, landscaping 			

Thank you to the Minnesota Office of Citizenship and Volunteer Services for the materials this handout is based on.





Handout 6 Formal Recognition and Times for Recognition

Major values of formal recognition

- Building community spirit among volunteers
- Publicly recognizing volunteers
- Attracting other volunteers to join

Cautions in formal recognition

- Thinking they replace daily “thank yous”
- Thinking they replace daily “thank yous”
- No personal presentations
- More costly - some volunteers object
- Not of interest to some of today’s volunteers
- Inflexible programs only have meaning to old-timers

Times for recognition

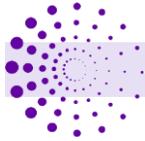
- When the volunteer signs up on the first day
- Daily or weekly basis
- Monthly or yearly basis
- Special occasions (birthdays, etc.)
- During a project
- End of project
- When volunteers leave the organization

Using Social Media for recognition

- Post a “Volunteer of the Month” or “Featured Volunteer”
- Post pictures of volunteers doing great work
- Thank easily– often and everywhere!
- Invite volunteers to contribute

Key Concept #4

Recognition can be creative and fun to give and receive.



Handout 7 Recognition Ideas from Minnesota Colleagues - 2019

Thank yous

- Keep a log of comments from staff/clients; when you hear a volunteer has been praised or appreciated, send a note of thanks
- Encourage others to say thank you
- Send handwritten postcards of thanks
- Say “Thank you” to volunteers daily

Learning opportunities

- Provide volunteers with advanced training
- Invite to staff in-services/trainings
- Send to relevant conferences

Additional responsibility

- Ask veteran volunteers to orient and mentor newer volunteers
- Promote volunteers to lead roles and offer more challenging tasks

Networking opportunities

- Set up times for group interaction
- Provide lunch or social hours for a chance to connect with other volunteers
- Arrange lunch with the CEO or key staff

Organizational accomplishments

- Report client satisfaction to volunteers
- Share program milestones and successes
- Send e-mail alerts to volunteers when the organization is mentioned in the news

Volunteer preferences

- Survey all volunteers to find out how they might like to be recognized
- Discuss options during the initial interview

Feedback opportunities

- Seek informal advice from volunteers
- Survey them regularly to gather input

Small gifts

- Take and share pictures showing personal achievements and ‘on the job’ moments
- Give out candy with a related note – i.e., Junior Mints - “You are worth a mint”
- Keep a goody treasure bag (i.e., treats, pencils, etc.) for spontaneous thank yous

On-site recognition

- Provide ribbons for volunteers to wear at work to draw attention to them
- Share volunteer birthdays/achievements with staff and other volunteers so that they can offer congratulations

Personal attention

- Send birthday cards; remember to send get well and sympathy cards if appropriate
- Seek one-on-one moments to check in
- Send ‘anniversary of volunteering’ cards
- Make contact on volunteer anniversaries to talk about how their assignments are going

Public acknowledgement

- Post volunteer thank yous on social media
- Create a “Volunteer Hall of Fame”
- Take pictures and post in common areas
- Highlight volunteer accomplishments in organization newsletter and local newspapers
- Nominate outstanding volunteers for awards

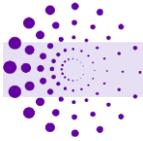
Working conditions

- Create a welcoming atmosphere – coffee and tea available during shifts, treats, etc.
- Provide volunteers with their own work space and a comfortable work environment
- Ensure access to needed equipment and technology, along with appropriate training
- Provide durable volunteer name badges
- Introduce to all staff and volunteers

Project volunteers

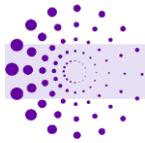
- Include project results in a thank you letter
- Make sure staff and other volunteers are aware of project implementation and results
- Offer lunch/food during project times
- Throw an end-of-project dinner/lunch/happy hour celebration
- Track project intervals and recognize completion of key goals or milestones
- Develop team incentives/friendly competition between project volunteer groups
- Present volunteers with project-based recognition items – certificates, tee shirts, etc.
- Send thank yous to employers of work teams





Handout 8
Key Principles for Successful
Recognition of Volunteers

- The key to volunteer recognition is placement in the job most suitable to his/her motivations and talents.
- Recognition must be meaningful to recipients, (not necessarily to the person giving the recognition).
- Formal awards should feel sincere, not pro forma. They should not only recognize number of hours but also the impact/outcome/result of the work. Use clear and published criteria for awards so that people feel that rewards are fair and deserved.
- Volunteer recognition should be timely.
- Many acts of recognition can be spontaneous and personal and often are not costly.
- Recognition needs to be continually updated to respond to changes in who is volunteering and what they expect.

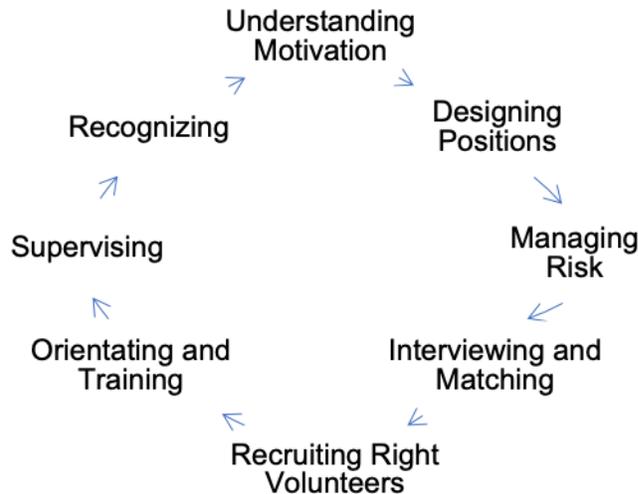


Handout 9 Retention of Volunteers

Key Concept #5

To increase volunteer retention, invest in practices that enrich the volunteer experience and create an organizational culture that values volunteers.

Volunteer Retention Is:



Volunteer Management Practices and the Retention of Volunteers

Volunteer management practices with the greatest influence on the retention of volunteers

1. Recognition Activities
2. Training, professional development for volunteers
3. Screening volunteers, matching to assignments and motivational style

* From: Urban Institute, *Volunteer Management Practices and the Retention of Volunteers*
Authors: Mark A. Hager, Jeffrey L. Brudney

<http://www.urban.org/research/publication/volunteer-management-practices-and-retention-volunteers>

Why Volunteer Talent Leaves

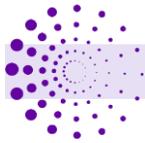
“...more than **one-third** of those who volunteer one year do not donate their time the next year—at any nonprofit. That adds up to an estimated \$38 billion in lost labor.”

Why?

- Failing to Match Volunteer Skills with assignments
- Failing to Recognize Volunteer Contributions
- Not Measuring the Value of Volunteers
- Failing to Train and Invest in volunteers and staff
- Failing to Provide Strong Leadership

* From: The New Volunteer Workforce http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_new_volunteer_workforce





Handout 10 Volunteer Retention Tips

Tips for Volunteer Retention from the Volunteers' Perspective

1. Having the right volunteer manager is crucial. From the volunteer perspective, the priority is a volunteer manager who:

- Is a “people person”
- Is responsive
- Is a good communicator
- Is focused on establishing a high-quality relationship with, and experience for, each volunteer
- Individualizes experiences—tailor positions to the strengths and limits of each volunteer—making the experience personal
- Handles scheduling needs/conflicts
- Revises the work to accommodate changes in health or availability
- Protects volunteers by watching for burnout; doesn't “suck volunteers dry”
- Accepts a volunteer's limits
- Makes volunteers feel valued.

2. Create an organizational culture that embraces, values, and respects volunteers by:

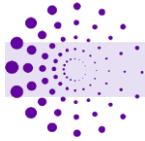
- Treating volunteers like partners and colleagues
- Making it a priority to involve volunteers in mission-critical work
- Having all employees welcome and acknowledge volunteers
- Involving volunteers from the very beginning when planning new programs
- Helping staff understand how much volunteers contribute to the organization
- Being prepared to accept volunteers if you advertise for them
- Having an intake process that reflects what a volunteer is being asked to do. Simple tasks mean a simple process. A complex task may require a more complex process.

3. Volunteers want to feel:

- Needed
- Valued
- That their work is meaningful
- That their work helps others
- That they are in control of the volunteer work (e.g., can do it on their own schedule).

* From: MAVA 2014 Boomer Volunteer Task Force, <http://www.mavanetwork.org/boomers>





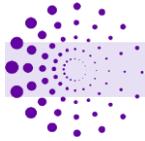
**Handout 11
Volunteer Retention Planning**

Develop a plan to improve volunteer retention

- Ask yourself- what would be a good retention rate for our area of work?
- Measure your current volunteer retention
 - The average length of time volunteers stay
 - And/or the % of volunteers that reach a certain benchmark of time (such as 3 years)
- Develop a plan on what you will change to improve retention.
- Set a goal for retention each of the next three years and measure progress.

Notes for your volunteer retention plan

What ideas will you try to improve volunteer retention?



Handout 12

Suggested Reading Resources on Recognizing and Retaining Volunteers

Websites

For quotes about volunteering, see <https://www.energizeinc.com/directory/volunteerism-quotes/quotes-search>

For quotes to use for volunteer recognition, see <http://www.quote garden.com/volunteer-apprec.html>

For special days related to volunteering, see <https://www.energizeinc.com/directory/days/global>

For vendors for volunteer recognition items, see <https://www.energizeinc.com/directory/vendors/gifts>

For a collection of articles on volunteer recognition, see https://www.energizeinc.com/how_to_volunteer_management/recognition

For volunteer recognition ideas for different generations, <http://mavanetwork.org/Resources/Documents/Recognition%20ideas%2010-16-12.pdf>

For easy, intermediate and advanced recognition ideas, see VISTA Campus at <http://www.vistacampus.gov/recognition-ideas>

For research from Volunteer Canada on volunteer recognition, see <https://volunteer.ca/index.php?MenuitemID=353>

For a tool where volunteers can enter what they like for recognition and have it emailed to you, see <http://volunteer.ca/vrt/>

Articles

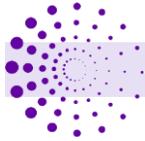
Eisner, David, Robert T. Grimm Jr., Shannon Maynard, & Susannah Washburn “The New Volunteer Workforce,” Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2009, http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_new_volunteer_workforce

Hager, Mark A. and Jeffrey L. Brudney, Urban Institute, “Volunteer Management Practices and the Retention of Volunteers,” Urban Institute, <http://www.urban.org/research/publication/volunteer-management-practices-and-retention-volunteers>

Havlat, Jill, “Top 8 ways to Show Volunteer Appreciation,” Nonprofit Hub, <http://www.nonprofithub.org/volunteer-management/top-8-ways-to-show-volunteer-appreciation/>

Issue Brief: “Volunteer Retention.” From Volunteering in America: 2007 State Trends and Ranking in Civic Live. Corporation for Nation and Community Service, http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/VIA/VIA_brief_retention.pdf





“Volunteers, Part I: What Makes Them Stay?”

<http://www.guidestar.org/rxa/news/articles/2007/volunteers-part-1-what-makes-them-stay.aspx>

“Volunteers, Part II: Why Do They Leave?”

<http://www.guidestar.org/rxa/news/articles/2007/volunteers-part-2-why-do-they-leave.aspx>

Volunteer Canada, Recognizing Volunteerism in 2017

https://volunteer.ca/vdemo/engagingvolunteers_docs/RecognizingVolunteeringIn2017_VolunteerCanada.pdf (downloadable copy)

See video of findings at www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZBV0zhwi3U

VolunteerMatch, “7 Ways to Appreciate Your Volunteers”

<https://blogs.volunteermatch.org/7-ways-to-appreciate-your-volunteers>

Books

McCurlay, Steve and Rick Lynch, *Keeping Volunteers: A Guide to Retention*. Fat Cat Publications, 2005. Available for order (\$8) at www.energizeinc.com/store/keeping_volunteers

Vineyard, Sue. *Beyond Banquets, Plaques and Pins: Creative Ways to Recognize Volunteers*. Heritage Arts, 1981. Out of print but available for order from Amazon (\$9/used).

<https://www.amazon.com/Beyond-Banquets-Plaques-Pins-Volunteers/dp/091102901X>

Wittich, Dr. Bill. *The Care and Feeding of Volunteers*. Knowledge Transfer Publishing, 2002. Available for order from Amazon (\$5/e-book, \$17.50 hard copy, used copies also available)

<https://www.amazon.com/Care-Feeding-Volunteers-Bill-Wittich/dp/1928794106>

Wittich, Dr. Bill. *Keep Those Volunteers Around*. Knowledge Transfer Publishing, 2002.

Available for order from Amazon (\$8/used) <https://www.amazon.com/Keep-Those-Volunteers-Around-Wittich/dp/1928794114>

Wittich, Dr. Bill. *77 Ways to Recognize Volunteers*. Knowledge Transfer Publishing, 2003.

Available for order from Amazon (\$2) <https://www.amazon.com/Ways-Recognize-Volunteers-Bill-Wittich/dp/1928794157>

